

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Belden Stratford Hotel  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number 2300 North Lincoln Park West  not for publication  
city, town Chicago  vicinity  
state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60614

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

William L. White, SHPO  
Signature of certifying official 7-20-92  
Date  
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling  
DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/  
Beaux Arts

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE  
walls BRICK  
TERRA COTTA  
roof TERRA COTTA  
other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

SEE SEPARATE PAGES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

The Belden Stratford Hotel is a fifteen story building, facing east on the northwest corner of North Lincoln Park West and Belden Avenue, across from Lincoln Park and Lake Michigan. The structure fills most of the 152 X 170 foot lot, rising in a U shape surrounding the three story entrance lobby. It was built in 1922-23 as an apartment hotel with various sized units ranging from one room to two bedroom apartments.

It is a steel frame and reinforced concrete structure built on reinforced concrete caissons. Setting on a base of granite, it is faced with terra cotta to the fourth floor on the street elevations, with off-white glazed brick above, enhanced with terra cotta trim. It features a very dramatic convex Mansard roof faced in purple terra cotta to resemble slate.

The two street facades facing Lincoln Park West to the east and Belden to the south are a tri-partite division of elaborate base and upper floors clad in terra cotta, with a simpler shaft section of glazed face brick in between. The design of the Belden Stratford Hotel is a hybrid of what Marcus Whiffen refers to as early 20th century Beaux Arts "classical pictorialism," with a roof and other details borrowed from the earlier Second Empire style. In its symmetry of design, its even light color, and its stateliness, it presents a Beaux Arts classical feel, emphasized by its balustraded central roof section, rusticated ground floor, and articulated belt courses. The heavy paired brackets, quoins, and whimsical entrance design, in addition to the roof, mark its French influence.

The symmetry of the building is further defined by the centrally located and elaborate entry. The curved terra cotta faced entry projects from the facade and features a two story round arched glass entrance, divided into small panes. The glass double entry doors and sidelights, which are not original, are divided from the transom above by a terra cotta spandrel. Surrounding the arch are terra cotta voussiors. The keystone is in the shape of a female bust with head in profile supporting a decorative cartouche with a "B" that is held aloft by garlanded putti. Above the cartouche an arched cornice projects on either side, where it is visually

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

supported by double brackets atop pilasters. Attached to each pilaster is a wrought iron lantern bracket. On either side of the pilasters, the terra cotta curves back to the plane of the facade. The original half circle spiked marquee is no longer extant, and has been replaced by a rectangular canopy of simple design extending over the sidewalk and drive.

The U shaped fifteen story sections surround the three story entrance/lobby area. The east facade of the central section and projecting sections feature three bays each. The lower three floors on the two street facades are faced in terra cotta to resemble stone. The first floor windows on these facades are large single openings comprised of a set of casements surrounded by fixed sidelights and transom, all of small panes. The second and third floor openings are sets of six over six double hung windows. These are separated between floors on the south section by a terra cotta spandrel of black tiles with a border of blue. On the north section, the spandrels are of black metal, and the windows are shorter allowing for a set of fixed transoms above the third floor windows. The sills of these windows at the second floor level were originally decorated with balustrades, which became deteriorated and had to be removed for safety reasons. Their replacement is being investigated. The tops of the windows are segmental arches with terra cotta surrounds and decorative keystones. Between the windows, paired brackets support a denticulated cornice that serves as a base for the shaft of the building.

The shaft portion of the design comprises eight floors, with a simple fenestration pattern of punched in windows. The central bay on each side is a grouping of three windows while the bays on either side are of two. There are very simple stone sills and heads, with no other trim or drip caps. Within the U shape and around the sides and back of the building, the windows are the same, in pairs or groups of three. There are six bays extending inward toward the center section, and nine bays on each of the side elevations. All are double hung windows in one over one light configuration. The shaft is sheathed in cream colored glazed face brick laid in common bond. The only decorations on this portion are the terra cotta quoins, resembling stone, rising from each corner. On the south elevation, the glazed brick and cornice decorations extend the full length of the building and around to one bay of the rear. On the north elevation, which was evidently never intended to be visible all the way back, the face brick

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3Belden Stratford Hotel

extends back about a third of the way to an indented light court one bay deep. From that point, around to and including the rear elevation, it is faced with Chicago common brick. In recent years, there has been a tall building built adjacent to the east (front) portion of the north wall, so that none of the north wall is visible from the street. The west rear elevation faces an alley and has a set of fire escapes attached to either end.

At the twelfth floor level, a belt course supports an intricate cornice, comprised of windows between huge paired brackets. Above the windows and between the brackets, modillions also visually support a cornice, which serves as a division between the shaft below and the roof above. Another floor faced in cream terra cotta with larger, single windows serves as the "base" for the Mansard roof above, from which it is separated by another belt course. Finally, surmounting the building, is the two story majestic convex Mansard roof. A row of tall arched dormer windows punch through the line of the roof. They are of two parts, separated by the same black and blue terra cotta spandrel as found on the south portion of the lower floors. The lower section of the window opening has large windows like the floor below it, while the upper portion above the spandrel features small panes. Each window is surrounded by decorative pilasters supporting heavy and ornate round arched drip caps. A final cornice caps the building roof. The roof itself, which appears to be slate, is actually covered in variegated purple terra cotta. The curbs and other details are of green terra cotta, resembling copper.

Within the U shape and on the north elevation, the Mansard ends halfway back on each projecting section. On the central section and the remaining projecting sections the top two floors resemble those below, with a flat surface topped by a heavy modillioned cornice. The central portion is then surmounted by a balustrade.

Though the building maintains excellent integrity, there have been some alterations over the years. The lobby remains as an intricate, French inspired three story space. Travertine marble walls feature pilasters inlaid with dark marble and rising to an ornate corniced ceiling. The travertine floor is surrounded by marble baseboards. A coved cornice frames a painted ceiling, with gilded moldings. Described in early brochures as painted to look like the sky, the ceiling has been repainted with a mural featuring blue sky and clouds. Originally, the open mezzanine was reached by

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

winding marble staircases leading from either side of the lobby. On the mezzanine level were the smoking lounge and public rooms. In 1941, a permit was granted for alterations on the first floor, but they were not specified. Then in 1947, a permit was granted to enclose the stairways to the mezzanine, and it may have been at that time that the mezzanine was enclosed also. The mezzanine is now reached by enclosed staircases from each side of the lobby, as it has been since at least 1954, and possibly since 1947. The alteration made at that time is uncertain. The original dining room on the first floor off the lobby has remained as an elegant restaurant, with many of the original features. At some time another, smaller restaurant was added on the other (south) side of the lobby, in what may have originally been a casual common dining space. The lower level beneath the lobby originally contained services for the residents, including a commissary, and has remained as a service oriented retail space, with laundry, commissary, beauty shop, travel agency, etc. The lower level has probably always been reached from the outside through a secondary entrance on the south side of the building, which was remodeled in the 1940's and features a polished steel canopy. That entrance remains as it was in the 1940's. To facilitate entry to the retail space, a recent rehabilitation has included a new flight of stairs leading down from the main lobby. In keeping with the symmetry of the lobby design, the new stairs is centrally located in the lobby, facing pedestrians as they enter through the second set of main entry doors. The stairs is surrounded by a black iron and brass railing in a design sympathetic to the lobby design and quality.

While the basic floor plans of the apartments have remained much the same, the rooms have been combined differently over the years to create apartments of varying sizes. The plan was designed so that single rooms could be opened into kitchenette apartments to offer larger units with more bedrooms. A 1954 auction brochure describes the Belden Stratford as having 485 rooms including 120 kitchenettes, which from an early floorplan appears to be as original. In 1954, the configuration is arranged into 19 single rooms, 20 suites, 39 apartments, 41 large apartments, 30 two bedroom apartments, one efficiency, and 7 special apartments. Today, the building contains 303 studio, one and two bedroom apartments, within the same basic floor plan. The interior finishes of the apartments were very simple, with wood floors, simple baseboards and trim, tile bathrooms, and modern electrical

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

kitchens with metal cabinets. There were no fancy moldings, fireplaces or exotic finishes. Recently, the kitchens and bathrooms have been updated with new fixtures, appliances and finishes, but left in existing locations. Trim has been repaired, duplicated as necessary and repainted, with new wallpaper or paint on walls, and new carpeting installed on floors. Many finishes had been changed over the years by long term residents, some who have been in the building for 30 years.

On the exterior there have been few alterations. To the west (rear) of the south arcade entry, three first floor windows have been replaced with large paned fixed windows. Another, small window on the south elevation appears to have been a single door entry at one time. On the east front facade, other than removing the balustrades below the second story windows for safety and replacing the canopy and entry doors, the only work has been maintenance. As part of a rehabilitation that was recently completed, the building was chemically cleaned, repointed as necessary and repaired. Above the third floor, windows were replaced as necessary in the double hung, one over one light pattern of the original. All new electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems were installed in the building. In addition, the property has maintained its integrity of location and setting on the park, and its feeling, workmanship, and association as an elegant residence with the services and status of a hotel.





**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

ARCHITECTURE

1923

1923

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Fridstein, Meyer

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

SEE SEPARATE PAGES

See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1

Belden Stratford Hotel

The Belden Stratford Hotel meets Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, as a locally significant example of an apartment hotel of distinguished design. Completed in 1923 during the building boom following World War I, the Belden Stratford was located on a commanding site overlooking Lincoln Park, along the path of northward lakefront development. It embodies the characteristics of an apartment hotel, a distinctive building type that developed after the turn of the century in response to better technology, changing social views of apartment living, demand for increased amenities, and the need for more quality multi-family living space for the upper middle class. The Belden Stratford's design is a 1920's abstraction of Beaux Arts "classical pictorialism" with Second Empire influences, most obviously in the bold and pronounced Mansard roof. The design was somewhat atypical for its time, but proved an imaginative and canny solution for its location and function. While providing the grandiosity demanded from its setting and calling appropriate attention to itself, it also reflected the good life that it offered. It was dramatic even in an era of eclecticism, and effectively incorporated the latest developments in terra cotta to achieve its distinctive design elements.

The 1920's witnessed the shaping of much of modern Chicago, and brought unprecedented prosperity to the city. With the end of World War I, peace unleashed a demand for a higher standard of living for the burgeoning population. As the Loop filled with new commercial structures, the outlying areas filled in with housing which, with the increased use of the automobile, spread to the suburbs. In Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis, Mayer and Wade report that over 60,000 persons were added to the municipal population each year. As the city grew, there was street and park improvement, new bridges, expansion of transportation services, and most striking of all, the development of the lake front. Millions of dollars went into new landfill on the shoreline and the construction of commercial and recreational facilities along the water's edge. Lincoln Park was expanded and ten miles of shoreline to the north were ripe for development. By 1921 when the Belden

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

Stratford was planned, photographs show that automobiles were already causing congestion in Lincoln Park.

The planning precedents for this northward development along the lake lay in the Burnham-Bennett Plan of Chicago of 1909. With the Streeterville landfill problem under control, construction began in that area in earnest, and a plan was approved for the construction of a bridge across the river at Michigan Avenue. This was the beginning of a plan for a grand thoroughfare to link the loop to Streeterville and the Gold Coast. It was delayed for years by legal problems and then World War I, but was finally realized in 1920, the same year that Benjamin Marshall's Drake Hotel was opened, and the "Magnificent Mile" was born. This initiated a new era for the north side. A 1922 statute, which included a mechanism for cooperative ownership of apartment buildings, came in response to the changed economy following World War I and the extensive shortage of dwelling units. A study of residential construction reported in The Western Architect in April 1926 showed that fifty-one percent of the annual increase in urban population during 1922-23 was housed in some form of multi-family dwelling.

By this time, Chicago had overcome its early prejudice against apartment buildings. In the Nineteenth Century, "flats" were considered by many to be uninhabitable, and were associated with the seedy side of urban life - small and cramped. By the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, apartment reform movements improved conditions to where they seemed a good solution for many, with more light and air and better floor plans.

At about the turn of the century, American architectural magazines were showing luxurious Parisian apartments with descriptions of the good, convenient life they offered. This coincided with the maturing of Chicago as a commercial and industrial center so that space and convenience became a premium, especially close to the lakefront. As a result, multi-family dwellings became not only socially acceptable but also desirable. However, they differed from the Parisian in crucial ways. In Chicago, it was important for apartments to appear as conventional and "homelike" as possible. The new luxury high-rise apartments were, for the most part, an extension of the family home. Too ornate was considered in bad taste. Facades were simple, dignified and restrained, avoiding any rigid adherence to a particular style in order to appeal to a wide variety of tastes.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 3Belden Stratford Hotel

By the 1920's the buildings constructed grew dramatically in height and size, which made it increasingly difficult to imitate homes and mansions in their design. Consequently, many of the larger buildings were designed to resemble hotels, a fact which contributed to the ongoing confusion between apartment buildings and hotels in Chicago. Until World War I, there was a statute forbidding the formation of corporations for the purpose of buying and improving land, so development became a speculative venture for individuals. Apartment buildings were built to garner income to pay the cost of holding land until the price rose so it could be profitably sold. They became instruments of speculation, and values inflated. By forming a corporation to build a hotel and then operating it as an apartment building, Chicagoans circumvented the statute.

Between 1885 and 1893 many new apartment buildings were closer to what we would expect in a hotel today, and were often called hotels. They were really French flats, offering the status and service of hotels, but appealed to permanent guests. They were built near exclusive residential districts, but also at the center of transportation intersections. The Virginia Hotel from 1888 at Rush and Ohio Streets, for example, set the standard of luxury for a decade. As its promotional brochure proclaimed, "one of the growing tendencies of the present time in the large cities is the constantly increasing number of families making their permanent homes in hotels." The Lexington Hotel, from 1891, was another example. It offered the privacy and permanency of a home, with the amenities of a hotel. These buildings physically resembled a hotel, and offered the provision of public dining rooms and parlors. But they were generally more subdued in style, as if to suggest the greater privacy of a residence. They were also like a residence in the configuration of the individual units and their location away from commercial hotels. As a result, they were neither clearly commercial structures in a city, as hotels were, nor residences in a neighborhood, as houses were.

Around the turn of the century, the larger apartment building became distinct and clearly identifiable from a hotel, ending much of the confusion. At that point, the "apartment hotel" also became a distinct, and third type, as a calculated combination of the two. The apartment hotel became distinct in program, interior arrangement, exterior appearance, and position within the urban fabric. The upper middle income and wealthy came to accept these

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 4Belden Stratford Hotel

buildings as suitable places of residence. As more of these were erected, architects could contrive interior and exterior designs that were precisely aimed at a particular clientele. They no longer had to borrow from or allude to the styles of private mansions.

According to C. William Westfall in his chapter "From Homes to Towers: A Century of Chicago's Best Hotels and Tall Apartment Buildings" in Chicago Architecture 1872-1922: Birth of a Metropolis, by the years just before World War I the apartment hotel as a type had splintered into two types catering to different social classes. One type of apartment hotel was aimed at younger people, and offered balconies, rooftop dining and dancing. An example of this type was the Eastwood Beach Apartments built near Broadway in Uptown, in 1916. The other type was directed at the more prosperous and established. One of the earliest of these on the north side was the Parkway Hotel on Lincoln Park West, also from 1916. It was designed by Walter Alschlager in a Renaissance Revival style. It was successful enough to warrant an addition of 163 suites by 1919. A marketing brochure entitled "Apartment Hotels" has this to say in 1922 about the Parkway and the Webster Hotel, just one block north of the Parkway on Lincoln Park West,

The tremendous demand for hotel accommodations is found to be due to the large number of residential guests, who have given up their private homes. The high cost of fuel, food and other commodities coupled with the desire of this class of people to be relieved of various home inconveniences is bringing about this change in the mode of living. Servants mean more rooms and more food. In an apartment hotel a family can live as comfortable in a five or six room apartment as they can in a very large private residence... The mistress of her home in the Parkway and Webster hotels has her problems simplified. She is not bothered with servants, coal bills, janitors, repairs and a thousand and one other vexing problems, with which the housewife is familiar, and then a community residence is less expensive than an individual residence."

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

The Belden Stratford Hotel combined both the exterior and interior features of an apartment hotel, as well as appropriate location and setting. Located one block north of the Webster Hotel just across Lincoln Park West from the flower gardens and conservatory, it was in an exclusive residential area. Though not in the commercial areas of the Loop and near north, it was easily accessible to Lake Shore Drive and public transportation. Its exterior appearance is closer to a hotel, both in size and design. It utilizes the courtyard configuration that had been popular since the 1890's for apartment buildings and hotels on sites that could accommodate it. In 1919 Benjamin Marshall chose this shape for the Drake Hotel at the corner of East Lake Shore Drive and Michigan Avenue, which lent to its grand air. It is a plan that allows much light and air into a large building that has many rooms. To this shape, designer Meyer Fridstein applied light colored cladding and exuberant details that reflect classical and French influences to lend a sophisticated, cosmopolitan air to the building. This was in contrast to the restrained Classical and Georgian air sought by the cooperative buildings and apartment houses along Lake Shore Drive.

The hotel feeling is carried into the interior public spaces of the building through a two story arched entrance under a marquee. The grand lobby rises three stories with a mezzanine, (originally open) and features opulent finishes and French and Classical details. The large public spaces were intended to encourage the social intermingling of residents should they desire it, as in a hotel. There was an elegant dining room for residents just off the lobby, which remains as a restaurant. Despite its grand exterior and public interior spaces, however, the apartment spaces are very private, simple and relatively unadorned. There are no maids rooms, as might be found in regular apartments for the middle and upper middle class, and there is generally little space for grand entertaining. There were single rooms, suites of rooms, and one and two bedroom apartments. The rooms were arranged so that many could be let as single rooms, or could be combined with kitchenette apartments to form larger units. Since the turn of the century, the rise of the Arts and Crafts movement with its emphasis on cleanliness and efficiency had given rise to the kitchenette, or small kitchen. A large proportion of the apartments in the Belden Stratford contained kitchenettes, so that these units resembled homes rather than hotel rooms and offered the privacy of non-communal dining. The brochure "Chicago's Most Distinctive Hotels:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

The Belden, the Webster and the Parkway," advertised thus about the Belden Stratford:

A central dining room exacting in its decorations and appointments, with quick, courteous and efficient service is provided for those guests who wish to take advantage of the Belden cuisine. Those guests who prefer the privacy of their own apartments with their completely equipped electric kitchen service will find most delightful their own private dining rooms and should occasion require they can avail themselves of the Belden Commissary and also private service which the management will supply.

The program and amenities offered by the Belden Stratford also combined features of both apartment and hotel. Units could be rented for short term transients or leased for long term permanency. It offered the status and service of a hotel, including maid service, utilities, and concierge services. The brochure, "Apartment Hotels" published shortly before the Belden Stratford opened, proclaimed:

The Belden Hotel... will undertake to combine in the highest degree all the privacy and comforts of the individual home with the superior service of the finest hotel. In his own apartment the guest and his family have everything that could possible be secured in the most modern private home, including a fully equipped kitchen and its service, and in addition he has at his call at all times the highest specialized service of the most efficient and carefully trained hotel organization. He is entirely rid of the servant problem, of all the petty details and annoyances incident to the operation of one's own home, and yet he has all the comforts of the individual home and all the delightful service of our best hotels at a total cost less than it would require to operate a separate home of his own.

The Parkway Hotel, the Webster Hotel, and the Belden Stratford were all owned and operated by the Lott Hotel Company, which appears to have owned only these three apartment hotels. The company was run by Charles Lott as president and his brother Earl Lott as secretary, with offices at the Parkway, and later at the Belden

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

Belden Stratford Hotel

Stratford. The buildings were built by G.H. Gottschalk and Company as developer. Walter Alschlager is listed as the architect of the Parkway Hotel and is listed on permits as architect of the Webster Hotel. However, by the time the Webster Hotel was built, Gottschalk had joined forces with Meyer Fridstein, who acted as designer and builder for the Belden Stratford, and is listed in several publications as the designer of the Webster Hotel.

Meyer Fridstein was born in 1884 in Marinette, Wisconsin, and attended the University of Wisconsin, studying structural engineering. Following graduation he worked for a few years in Milwaukee and then, still a very young man, moved to Chicago where he worked in the offices of both Richard Schmidt and Marshall and Fox. It is known that Fridstein worked on the Blackstone Hotel by Marshall and Fox in 1908-09, and the influence of Benjamin Marshall seems apparent in his appropriation of bold forms and exuberant details. While Fridstein and Company were known mostly as engineers, they appear to have been contractors as well, and also employed an in-house architectural firm. Fridstein designed and built a number of hotels, industrial and commercial buildings, and numerous theaters in and around Chicago such as the Tivoli, Tower and Harding Theaters. He did a considerable amount of work outside Chicago, including banks for a number of midwestern cities. Fridstein teamed up with Gottschalk sometime between 1916 and 1919, when he worked on the Webster Hotel.

Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, many important architects in America looked to Europe, and especially France, for inspiration. Quite a few architects who practiced in Chicago, such as H.H. Richardson and Louis Sullivan, studied in Paris. While studying at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, they learned French styles and compositional methods, and certainly became familiar with apartment buildings there. While some of these architects used this inspiration to help them develop a distinctly American architecture, others believed that only by appealing to French architectural traditions could they develop a legitimate formal vocabulary of their own. Benjamin Marshall was one who exploited the most flamboyant of styles to bring the right ambience to his larger buildings. He rekindled the use of French styles such as the Second Empire which had been popular in Chicago in the 1870's and 1880's. The Blackstone Hotel of 1909, with its richly worked exterior in red and white glazed terra cotta and heavy ornament was a flamboyant extension of his more restrained residences and



## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

apartments in the Georgian and Adamesque styles. It brought to Chicago the image of a sophisticated and cosmopolitan world.

Though the Belden Stratford Hotel was designed eleven years after the Blackstone Hotel, Fridstein was obviously influenced by his work with Benjamin Marshall in general and the Blackstone Hotel in particular, and so drew from that source. With many eclectic styles to choose from in the 1920's, Beaux Arts Classicism with a Mansard roof may have been an inspired choice to make the sophisticated statement that he wished to make for a large apartment hotel. On North Lake Shore Drive, the cooperatives, apartment buildings and apartment hotels of the time tended to be either some form of restrained Classical design, or Tudor. Fridstein may have been somewhat encouraged by the grand location of the Belden, placed on a spacious site fronted by park and flower gardens, looking out over Lincoln Park's Conservatory.

Certainly Fridstein was influenced by recent advances in the use of terra cotta, as he used colored terra cotta on this building to imitate slate on the Mansard roof, and to add other ornament characteristic of the style. Used since 1870 in Chicago primarily for fireproofing but also for ornamentation, terra cotta technology made another step forward with the Reliance building in 1895. Instead of confining its use to ornamentation, Burnham called for entire glazed terra cotta facades, which led to its recognition as a material adapted to architecturally clad steel frame buildings. In 1911, J. Monroe Hewlett in The Brickbuilder made the point that terra cotta was not "merely a less expensive substitute for stone." He predicted that architects would begin to explore the use of colorful terra cotta exteriors. At that time, colored terra cotta was confined mostly to red and off white, such as that used on the Blackstone Hotel. By the early 1920's, the National Terra Cotta Society was publishing a brochure series to encourage new uses of terra cotta and creative use of colors. At this same time, Chicago architects were discovering fanciful uses of terra cotta that allowed their post-war exuberance a free rein. One of the earliest and most celebrated buildings to embody this new architectural mood was the Wrigley Building, with its exterior entirely clad in cream terra cotta. It was built in 1921, the same year that the Belden Stratford was being designed, and may have influenced Fridstein's choice of an overall cream color for the building. Regarding color, the National Terra Cotta Society brochure said ca. 1920, "The successful development of the first glazes less than 20

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Belden Stratford Hotel

years ago gave great impetus to further advance, for with the principle of terra cotta glazes understood, the matter of developing various colors was comparatively simple. Today, almost any color can be produced." Much of the colored terra cotta was used on facades to reproduce exotic ornament, often in Art Deco styles. An excellent example of this is the Egyptian design of the Reebie Building at Clark and Belden, which was also completed in 1923. On the Belden Stratford, Fridstein used terra cotta elegantly both as cladding and as ornamentation. But in addition, he also used it in a less conventional manner in unusual purple colors to resemble a slate roof. Fridstein's use was a creative way of advancing the use of the material just at a time when this was the focus of the industry.

Beaux Arts Classicism in the early 20th Century was a kind of historical eclecticism which became ubiquitous in Chicago following the Columbian Exposition of 1893 and lingered long thereafter. It tended to be particularly popular for public buildings with its sense of formalism and symmetry, but it borrowed elaborate details from earlier French eras, and it synthesized the Greek and Roman orders. The Mansard Roof was a prominent characteristic of the earlier Second Empire style, which, like Beaux Arts Classicism, was also a French interpretation of classical elements but with less restraint. In the United States, Second Empire was popular during U.S. Grant's presidency, 1869-1877, especially for public buildings. It continued into the 1880's with some elements being borrowed for mansions and hotels up to the turn of the century. The latest use of a Mansard roof on a large and prominent building in Chicago was the Blackstone Hotel.

The Belden Stratford Hotel features many of the characteristics of these styles, rendered in a uniquely 1920's manner. The most obvious is the Mansard roof, traditionally covered with multi-colored slates or tinplates, and here, as mentioned above, interpreted in terra cotta. The windows in the roof are tall, with arched pedimented tops with elaborate moldings. Also characteristic are the tall arched entrance and windows on the lower floors. The richly embellished cartouche is expressive of 18th Century French design. The rusticated lower floors continue up the corners as quoins to multiple belt courses with elaborate moldings and bracketed cornices.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

Belden Stratford Hotel

Of the extant apartment hotels along the lakefront areas of Chicago, the Belden Stratford can most closely be compared to others in the Lincoln Park area and those in Hyde Park along the south shore. In its neighborhood, the most similar are the Parkway and the Webster, which have been discussed above. Those two, along with the Belden Stratford, illustrate an evolution of the type, proceeding chronologically from south to north. The Parkway is a restrained Renaissance Revival style from 1916 with much less opulent public spaces. The Webster Hotel, completed in 1920, was very similar in its spatial arrangement and program, with a large ornate lobby, a dining room, and units of varying sizes up to two bedroom apartments. Stylistically, it is more restrained than the Belden Stratford but has a very well defined tri-partite facade arrangement with elaborate lower and upper floors featuring two story rounded arches and intricate ornamentation. The shape of the building is different, representing a simple rectangle from the street facades, with a light court at the rear. While the terra cotta clad upper and lower floors are a grayish white, the shaft portion is a contrasting buff color.

The other extant major apartment hotel in the area is the Belmont Hotel at Belmont and Sheridan Road completed in 1924, a year after the Belden Stratford. It was originally referred to as the Belmont Hotel and Apartments, and is twelve stories in height and a bit larger in plan than the Belden Stratford. It was designed by Fugard and Knapp in more typical red brick with off-white terra cotta trim. The trim features various characteristics of classical design but is also more restrained than the Belden Stratford. The Belmont offered the usual apartment hotel amenities with less elaborate public spaces, and the units were clearly designated as either hotel rooms or apartments.

On the south shore, there is an excellent collection of eight apartment hotels dating from 1918-1929 listed on the National Register as "Hyde Park Apartment Hotels, Chicago, Illinois." Two of those date from 1922-24. One of those, the Windemere House, is also listed individually on the National Register, and was described as being the most lavish in the city when it was completed in early 1924. Certainly a close rival to the Belden Stratford, it was twelve stories, of Neo-classical design in light cream brick with terra cotta trim. It also featured large public spaces and offered 482 guest rooms and 200 apartments in suites of up to five rooms. The East Park Towers, originally East End Park

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

Apartment Hotel, was built at the same time as the Belden Stratford and is ten stories tall in an irregular U shape. It was designed to appear more residential, with Georgian design influences in red brick and terra cotta. The Shoreland, another of the Hyde Park apartment hotels, was built in 1925-26, by the Belden Stratford Hotel's designer Meyer Fridstein. It is an imposing building of thirteen stories, in a U shape on a large floor plan. It is faced with buff brick and terra cotta in a neo-classical design with lavish terra cotta details. Though more restrained than the Belden Stratford, with a simple flat roof, it bears many stylistic similarities and is described as monumental and impressive when viewed from a distance. All of these hotels maintain good integrity.

The Belden Stratford Hotel remained under the ownership of the Lott Hotel Company until 1954, when it, along with the Webster Hotel, was auctioned off. At that time, it was "offered for rent on a furnished basis and provided with customary hotel service. Has dining room, shops, and public rooms." It remains an apartment hotel, in its design and location, as well as its combination of amenities and style. Its exterior and grand lobby space remain, with two dining areas in original locations off the lobby. Also, the original elevator halls and corridors remain, and the apartment floor plans have changed very little. There is still a range of resident services available on the lower level. The Belden Stratford Hotel maintains its integrity of design, location, setting, and even its function.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   1  

Belden Stratford Hotel

- Chicago Tribune, Jan. 6, 1964. Obituary of Meyer Fridstein.
- Craib-Cox, John. "Houses in the Sky", Architectural Review, Vol. CLXII, No.968: Oct. 1977.
- Darling, Sharon, Decorative and Architectural Arts in Chicago 1871-1933. Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1982.
- Fridstein, Robert. Telephone Interview, Oct. 31, 1991.
- Gordon, Eleanor and Nerenberg, Jean, "Chicago's Colorful Terra Cotta Facades," Chicago History, Winter 1979-1980.
- Hilliard, Celia. "Rent Reasonable to Right Parties: Gold Coast Apartment Buildings 1906-1929", Chicago History
- Lakeside Directory, Chicago: 1923.
- Lott Hotel Company, Apartment Hotels: The Belden, the Webster, the Parkway. Chicago: n.d.
- Lott Hotel Company, Chicago's Most Distinctive Hotels: The Belden, the Webster, the Parkway. Chicago: Bert L. White Co., n.d.
- Lott Hotel Company, Auction selling of Two Famous Chicago Hotels: The Belden Stratford and The Webster. Chicago: April, 1954.
- Mayer, Harold M. and Wade, Richard C. Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- National Terra Cotta Society, Architectural Terra Cotta, Brochure Series, New York: Vol. 3, ca. 1920.
- Pardridge, A.J. and Bradley, Harold. Directory to Apartments of the Better Class along the North Side of Chicago. Chicago: 1917.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   9   Page   2  

Belden Stratford Hotel

---

Sexton, R.W. American Apartment Houses, Hotels and Apartment Hotels of Today. New York: Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1929.

Westfall, C. William. "From Homes to Towers: A Century of Chicago's Best Hotels and Tall Apartment Buildings," Chicago Architecture 1872-1922: Birth of a Metropolis, Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1987.

Westfall, C. William. "The Golden Age of Chicago Apartments," Inland Architect, Chicago: Inland Architect Press, Nov. 1980

Westfall, C. William. "Home at the Top: Domesticating Chicago's Tall Apartment Buildings," Chicago History, Vol.XIV, No.1:Spring, 1985.





# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
P.O. BOX 37127  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20013-7127

IN REPLY REFER TO

The Director of the National Park Service is pleased to inform you that the following properties have been entered in the National Register of Historic Places. For further information call 202/343-9542.

**RECEIVED**

**MAY 29 1992**

**MAY 22 1992**

**PRESERVATION SERVICES**

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES 5/11/92 THROUGH 5/15/92

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number-NHL Status, Action, Date, Multiple Name

- ALASKA, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH-CENSUS AREA, Discovery Claim on Pedro Creek, Mile 16.5 Steese Hwy., Fairbanks vicinity, 92000498, NOMINATION, 5/13/92
- ALASKA, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH-CENSUS AREA, Rose Building, 520 Church St., Fairbanks, 92000444, NOMINATION, 5/11/92
- CALIFORNIA, EL DORADO COUNTY, Tahoe Meadows, US 50 between Ski Run Blvd. and Park Ave., South Lake Tahoe, 90000555, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 5/11/92
- DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATE EQUIVALENT, US Chamber of Commerce Building, 1615 N St., NW., Washington, 92000499, NOMINATION, 5/13/92
- FLORIDA, BREVARD COUNTY, Community Chapel of Melbourne Beach, 501 Ocean Ave., Melbourne Beach, 92000505, NOMINATION, 5/14/92
- ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY, Belden Stratford Hotel, 2300 N. Lincoln Park West, Chicago, 92000485, NOMINATION, 5/11/92
- ILLINOIS, LA SALLE COUNTY, Knussl Building, 215--217 W. Main, Ottawa, 92000486, NOMINATION, 5/11/92
- ILLINOIS, LAKE COUNTY, Deerpark Inn, 295 E. Illinois Rd., Lake Forest, 92000482, NOMINATION, 5/11/92
- INDIANA, HANCOCK COUNTY, New Palestine School, Larrabee St. at jct. with Depot St., New Palestine, 91000791, REMOVAL, 3/17/92
- KENTUCKY, HENDERSON COUNTY, South Main and South Elm Streets Historic District, Roughly bounded by Washington, Center, S. Green, Jefferson, S. Main and Water Sts., Henderson, 92000500, NOMINATION, 5/11/92
- KENTUCKY, JEFFERSON COUNTY, L & N Steam Locomotive No. 152, 1837 E. River Rd., Louisville, 74000883, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION, 5/13/92
- LOUISIANA, LIVINGSTON PARISH, Decareaux House, 16021 LA 16, French Settlement, 92000507, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- LOUISIANA, LIVINGSTON PARISH, Cuilteaux House, 16825 LA 16, French Settlement, 92000508, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- LOUISIANA, LIVINGSTON PARISH, Lobel, Adam House, 15715 LA 16, French Settlement, 92000509, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- LOUISIANA, POINTE COUPEE PARISH, Bergeron, Valmont, House, LA 414, Jarreau vicinity, 92000512, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- LOUISIANA, ST. JAMES PARISH, Crauguard Farms Plantation House, 5825 LA 18, St. James vicinity, 92000510, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- LOUISIANA, ST. JAMES PARISH, Little Texas, 2834 LA 44, Paulina vicinity, 92000511, NOMINATION, 5/14/92 (Louisiana's French Creole Architecture MPS)
- MISSOURI, COLE COUNTY, Jefferson City Community Center, 608 E. Dunklin St., Jefferson City, 92000503, NOMINATION, 5/14/92
- NEBRASKA, BOONE COUNTY, US Post Office--Albion, 310 W. Church St., Albion, 92000475, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, COLFAX COUNTY, US Post Office--Schuyler, 119 E. 11th St., Schuyler, 92000476, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, DAWES COUNTY, US Post Office--Crawford, 144 Main St., Crawford, 92000477, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, FILLMORE COUNTY, US Post Office--Geneva, 202 N. 9th St., Geneva, 92000478, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, HOLT COUNTY, US Post Office--O'Neill, 204 N. 4th St., O'Neill, 92000479, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, KEARNEY COUNTY, US Post Office--Minden, 410 N. Minden St., Minden, 92000471, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, KEITH COUNTY, US Post Office--Ogallala, 301 N. Spruce St., Ogallala, 92000481, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, NEWANA COUNTY, US Post Office--Auburn, 1320 Courthouse Ave., Auburn, 92000480, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, PAWNEE COUNTY, US Post Office--Pawnee City, 703 C St., Pawnee City, 92000472, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, THAYER COUNTY, US Post Office--Hebron, 145 N. 15th St., Hebron, 92000473, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)
- NEBRASKA, WEBSTER COUNTY, US Post Office--Red Cloud, 300 N. Webster, Red Cloud, 92000474, NOMINATION, 5/11/92 (Nebraska Post Offices which contain Section Artwork MPS)